



Aruba's ONLY English newspaper

From masks to book banning, conservatives take on educators

By MEAD GRUVER
Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — A recent Wyoming school board meeting was again packed with opponents of mask mandates when things took an abrupt turn and a parent started reading aloud sexually explicit passages from a book available in school libraries.

"Parents like myself had no idea this stuff was here," the parent, Shannon Ashby, told trustees of Laramie County School District No. 1 in the capital city.

The push to remove objectionable books from school libraries is part of a renewed conservative interest in public education as a political issue since the start of the pandemic. Parents who first packed school board meetings to express their opposition to mask mandates and other COVID-19 measures have since broadened their focus to other issues they say clash with conservative values, including teachings about social justice, gender, race and history.



Amanda Darrow, director of youth, family and education programs at the Utah Pride Center, poses with books that have been the subject of complaints from parents in recent weeks on Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021, in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press

Continued on Page 2

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| SUNDAY: TICO KOCK STEEL DRUM 4 - 6pm | MONDAY: ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm | TUESDAY: JEAN PAUL SAXOPHONIST 6:30 - 8:30pm | WEDNESDAY: PAULA RIDERSTAP SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm | THURSDAY: RICKY THOMAS GUITAR 7 - 9pm | FRIDAY: RICKY THOMAS GUITAR 7 - 9pm | SATURDAY: ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|

PAULA RIDERSTAP SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm

Happy Hour 12-1/4-6/9-10 PREMIUM BRANDS

KARAOKE HAPPY HOUR 9:00 - 11:00pm

costa linda beach resort

WATER'S EDGE RESTAURANT & BAR

Tel +297 583 8000 Ext. 8150 | Reservations at wateredge-aruba.com | Elegant dining, spectacular ocean views enjoyed al fresco or in air conditioned comfort | Located at Costa Linda Beach Resort

ARUBA LIVING TODAY PRESENTS COMMANDEURS "A way of living today"

(+297) 593 - 91 77 | randolph@livingtoday.aw | www.livingtoday.aw

sale starts now

PHASE 1 started september 2020
PHASE 2 approx. start 1st quarter 2021
PHASE 3 approx. start medio 2022

Starting at \$152,000,-

FULL SOLAR OCEAN VIEW COMMUNITY POOL ELEVATOR COVERED PARKING HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION LOW MAINTENANCE

Rumba Gitana y Flamenco **Olé Wednesdays**
Angela Croes Zanelty y Bryan Maduro Live

ANGELA Live "Sound of Violin" THURSDAYS

Happy Hour & Early Bird 5-7

Bohemian BAR AND RESTAURANT
French & World Cuisine in Tropical Garden

FRIDAYS SATURDAYS electro lounge In House we Trust

Sanghita & Martin on LIVE
Sunday Soir a partir de 7:00 pm

Tel +297 280 8448 Reservation at www.bohemianaruba.com Free Parking at The Barcelo Hotel

From masks to book banning, conservatives take on educators

Continued from Front

Such issues played a key role in last month's Virginia governor's election and are now poised to be in the Republican spotlight in the 2022 midterms.

"If you put pictures to the material that was read, our superintendent would be in jail for trafficking in kiddie porn," said Darin Smith, a local attorney and former Republican congressional candidate whose wife is on the school board. "I would never have known these extreme leftists that are controlling our school district had I not gone to voice my opposition to the masking."

The award-winning book Ashby wants pulled from Cheyenne high school and



Amanda Darrow, director of youth, family and education programs at the Utah Pride Center, poses with books that have been the subject of complaints from parents in recent weeks on Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021, in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press

middle schools, "Monday's Not Coming," by Tiffany D. Jackson, is a novel about the mysterious disappearance of a Black teenager. Supporters say it contains important messages about topics such as poverty, child abuse and friendship,

though it does include scenes such as a boy and a girl having sex on a teacher's desk.

Ashby also read allusions to sex acts in "Traffick," by Ellen Hopkins, a novel about teenagers victimized by sex trafficking.

Similar disputes over public school curricula and books arose recently in Virginia, where with help from former Vice President Mike Pence they became a major issue in Republican Glenn Youngkin's successful campaign for governor. They've also been a political issue in the Carolinas and Texas while school officials in Kansas pulled almost 30 books from shelves after a complaint but soon returned them.

In Utah, the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union opened an investigation in November after a suburban Salt Lake City district removed several books including "The Bluest Eye," by Toni Morrison, pending investigation into a parent complaint. Other books that have been the subject of complaints in the city's schools include titles with LGBTQ characters and plot lines. "There is a wave of well-funded, well-organized attacks in our schools and looking to remove library books from the shelves," Utah Education Association President Heidi Matthews said.

Library organizations are pushing back, pointing out that many of the books in question depict struggles of minorities. Efforts to remove them send a message to minority youth that their views don't matter, said Deborah Caldwell Stone, director of the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom.

"It's a terrible message to send to young people," Stone said. "For me, it's just astonishing that so many groups that use 'liberty' in their names, that claim that they're all for freedom and the individual right to exercise freedom, resort so quickly to use censorship." Ashby belongs to Moms for Liberty, a conservative group that says it challenges "short-sighted and destructive" policies in public schools.

Wyoming's top education official, however, questioned whether the book disputes are a fundamentally conservative cause. "Labeling this as a 'conser-

vative' issue is a disservice to parents and their children. We should embrace parents wanting to engage with their children's education, not label them," Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow, a Republican, said in a statement Thursday.

In September, Balow joined Wyoming's Republican legislative leaders in supporting proposed state legislation to counter the teaching of "critical race theory," which has become a catch-all term for efforts to teach that systemic racism remains a persistent problem in the U.S. Opponents of those efforts say they are divisive and counterproductive. Balow noted that disputes over books aren't new. Since the 1970s, for example, several books by children's and young adult author Judy Blume have been banned from schools and libraries for everything from sexuality to endings people didn't like. Mark Twain's "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" is another frequent target due to racist language.

Ashby said she first heard about the books in the Cheyenne district after tuning in to conservative podcasts. She then checked an online school library book database to see which books mentioned in the podcasts were in Cheyenne. "I figured living in Cheyenne, Wyoming, we would be safe," said Ashby, who removed her three children from the district at the start of the school year because of the mask mandate. Cheyenne school officials haven't begun reviewing the books Ashby opposes because nobody has filed a formal complaint, Superintendent Margaret Crespo said.

Crespo said book opponents at school board meetings represent a small fraction of the community and not those who've written or spoken to school officials in support, though the district has begun adjusting its policies for books, including how they are purchased and checked out. □

Paseo Herencia

Live Entertainment at 8pm

MON Latin Dance Show **TUE Arts & Crafts Expression**

WED Cultural Dance Show **THU Acrobatic Show**

SUN Violin Show **Nightly Watershows 7:30pm - 8:30pm - 9:30pm**

WWW.PASEOHERENCIA.COM

Fauci says omicron variant is 'just raging around the world'

By JOSH BOAK

Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) —

The COVID-19 omicron variant is "just raging around the world," the White House's top medical adviser said Sunday as President Joe Biden prepares to issue "a stark warning of what the winter will look like" for unvaccinated Americans.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the country's leading infectious disease expert, told NBC's "Meet the Press" that "the real problem" for the U.S. hospital system is that "we have so many people in this country who are eligible to be vaccinated who have not yet been vaccinated."

The prospect of a winter chilled by a wave of coronavirus infections is a severe reversal from the optimism projected by Biden some 10 months ago, when he suggested at a CNN town hall that the country would essentially be back to normal by this Christmas. Biden has been careful not to overpromise, yet confidence in the country has been battered by an unrelenting wave of COVID-19 mutations and variations that have left many Americans emotionally exhausted, dispirited and worried about infections.

Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, tried to defend the president's earlier promise in a separate interview Sunday



Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaks during the daily briefing at the White House in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021.

Associated Press

on CNN's "State of the Union." "The idea about hoping and having an aspiration to be independent of the virus after a period of time is understandable and reasonable," Fauci said. "But the one thing that we know from, now, almost two years' experience with this virus is that it is really very unpredictable."

With the threat that rising infections could worsen the supply chain challenges facing the United States and fuel inflation, Gov. Jared Polis, D-Colo., said Biden should stop talking about vaccination as two shots and a booster and instead call it "three doses" that

are needed to maximize protection.

Polis pivoted to inflation that is running at a nearly four-decade high, saying Biden in his remarks on Tuesday about the omicron variant needed to show the country how he is addressing the rising cost of goods. "We can do very concrete things that actually reduce the costs for Americans," Polis said on NBC, noting that Colorado is cutting vehicle registration fees and making it free to register a new business.

The administration is expecting a series of breakthrough infections with the surge of holiday travelers.

Fauci said most people who have been vaccinated and gotten a booster should be fine if they take precautions such as wearing masks in crowded settings including airports.

Biden plans to speak Tuesday on the status of the fight against COVID-19 and discuss government help for communities in need of assistance, White House press secretary Jen Psaki tweeted. She also said he will be "issuing a stark warning of what the winter will look like for Americans that choose to remain unvaccinated." Fauci was asked on CNN whether he expected a record num-

bers of cases — and what about hospitalizations and deaths. "Yes, well, unfortunately, I think that that is going to happen," he said. Fauci told NBC the president would again urge people to get the booster shot, highlight increased availability of testing, discuss "surge teams" for besieged hospitals and explain how important it is to provide vaccines for the rest of the world.

"The one thing that's very clear, and there's no doubt about this, is its extraordinary capability of spreading, its transmissibility capability. It is just, you know, raging through the world, really," Fauci said. "And if you look even here in the United States, you have some regions that start off with a few percent of the isolates that are positive, now going up to 30%, 40%, and some places 50%."

Psaki's announcement Saturday on Twitter came after Vice President Kamala Harris said in a Los Angeles Times interview that the Biden administration "didn't see delta coming. I think most scientists did not — upon whose advice and direction we have relied — didn't see delta coming." She added: "We didn't see omicron coming. And that's the nature of what this, this awful virus has been, which as it turns out, has mutations and variants." □

OSHA vaccine mandate penalties to start Jan. 10

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration said Saturday that it would not issue citations tied to its coronavirus vaccination mandate before Jan. 10, so that companies have time to adjust to and implement the requirements.

The federal agency separately said there would be no citations of companies regarding its testing requirements before Feb. 9. The announcement came after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth District

in Cincinnati decided on Friday that the mandate for large employers could go forward, reversing a previous court decision made after 27 Republican-led states, conservative groups, business associations and some individual companies challenged the mandate.

OSHA said in a statement that it would not issue citations before the listed dates "so long as an employer is exercising reasonable, good faith efforts to come

into compliance with the standard."

The mandate was previously slated to take effect Jan. 4.

The Biden administration's vaccine requirement applies to companies with 100 or more employees and covers about 84 million U.S. workers. Employees who are not fully vaccinated have to wear face masks and be subject to weekly COVID-19 tests. There are exceptions, including for those who work outdoors or



A syringe is prepared with the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination clinic at the Keystone First Wellness Center in Chester, Pa., Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2021.

Associated Press

only at home. Administration officials estimate that the mandate will

save 6,500 lives and prevent 250,000 hospitalizations over six months. □

Ex-hostages doing well, have left Haiti, mission agency says

By **PETER SMITH and CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN**
Associated Press

All the former hostages from a U.S.-based missionary group kidnapped in Haiti have been flown out of the country after a two-month ordeal, the leader of their Ohio-based missions organization said Friday, as he also extended an offer of forgiveness to their captors.

David Troyer, general director of Christian Aid Ministries, said in a video statement that a U.S.-flagged plane left the Caribbean nation Thursday afternoon carrying the last 12 kidnapped missionaries, hours after they were freed earlier in the day.

"Everyone including the 10-month-old baby, the 3-year-old boy and the 6-year-old boy seem to be doing reasonably well," Troyer said.

The last releases came two months to the day after the group of 16 Americans and one Canadian — including five children — were kidnapped by the 400 Mawozo gang, which initially demanded millions of dollars in ransom. The other five had been freed earlier. Troyer did not comment on the circumstances of the release, such as whether ransom was paid or a rescue effort was involved, but expressed thanks to



A caravan drives to the airport after departing from the Christian Aid Ministries headquarters at Titanyen, north of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Dec. 16, 2021.

"the U.S. government and all others who assisted in the safe return of our hostages."

"Thank you for understanding our desire to pursue nonviolent approaches," he added, without elaboration.

Based in Berlin, Ohio, Christian Aid Ministries, or CAM, is supported and staffed by conservative Anabaptists, a range of Mennonite, Amish and related groups whose hallmarks include nonresistance to evil, plain dress and separation from mainstream society.

In keeping with Anabaptist teaching, which puts a pre-

mium on forgiveness, Troyer offered conciliatory words to the captors.

"A word to the kidnapers: We do not know all of the challenges you face. We do believe that violence and oppression of others can never be justified. You caused our hostages and their families a lot of suffering," he said. "However, Jesus taught us by word and by his own example that the power of forgiving love is stronger than the hate of violent force. Therefore, we extend forgiveness to you." Troyer said the hostages had "prayed for their captors and told them about

God's love and their need to repent."

The missionaries were abducted Oct. 16 shortly after visiting an orphanage in Ganthier, in the Croix-des-Bouquets area, where they verified it had received aid from CAM and played with the children, Troyer said.

"As they became aware of what was happening at the time of capture, the group began singing the chorus, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them,'" Troyer said, quoting from the biblical book of Psalms. "This song became a favor-

ite of theirs, and they sang it many times throughout their days of captivity."

The hostages remained together as a group throughout, he said, in prayer, in song and encouraging each other.

Troyer said CAM workers were aware of dangers in Haiti, where gang activity and kidnappings have been on the rise.

But the organization often works in such perilous places precisely because "that is usually where the biggest needs are," he added.

CAM hopes to continue working in Haiti, Troyer said, while acknowledging that it will need to bolster security protocols and "better instruct our people about the dangers involved."

Authorities have said 400 Mawozo was demanding \$1 million per person in ransom, although it wasn't clear if that included the children. The gang's leader had threatened to kill the hostages unless his demands were met.

Also Friday, a meeting including representatives of 14 countries, various international organizations and Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry produced broad commitments to address security and the political and economic situation in the impoverished Caribbean nation, according to a top U.S. diplomat. □



In this photo provided by the Salvation Army, toys donated after a Salvation Army van loaded with \$6,000 worth of toys for children was stolen earlier in the week are shown Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021 in Farmington, N.M.

Associated Press

FARMINGTON, N.M. (AP) — Farmington-area residents of northern New Mexico

donated gifts and money after somebody stole a Salvation Army van loaded

Salvation Army official: Theft of toys no victory for Grinch

with \$6,000 worth of toys for children, according authorities.

"The Grinch will not have this victory," Salvation Army Lt. Christopher Rockwell told The Associated Press on Saturday.

Business leaders and others began making donations after the marked van with gifts intended for more than 350 children was stolen Tuesday from outside a store, Rockwell said.

The donations included "lots of toys, lots of clothing" as well as hygiene items and cash, certainly adding up to more than

enough to replace the stolen items intended for children who are signed up for a distribution event Monday, Rockwell said. "We have like a waiting list ... so we could see what we have left over."

The generosity showed the "compassion and the hearts that people have for each other here," Rockwell said. "It's a massive blessing beyond comprehension." Farmington police said Saturday that an arrest warrant has been issued for a 37-year-old man who is considered a suspect in the theft.

The van and toys have not been recovered yet and no arrest had been made or a possible motive determined, according to police. "I think it was just some evil, unscrupulous person who just saw an opportunity," Rockwell said. "Desperate, I understand that, but to do this is just beyond imagination."

The Salvation Army is a Christian organization founded in 1865 in London. It is active in more than 100 countries and is best known for its charity shops, homeless shelters and disaster relief. □

Netherlands 'going into lockdown again' to curb omicron

By **DANICA KIRKA** and
MIKE CORDER

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Nations across Europe moved to reimpose tougher measures to stem a new wave of COVID-19 infections spurred by the highly transmissible omicron variant, with the Netherlands leading the way by imposing a nationwide lockdown.

All non-essential stores, bars and restaurants in the Netherlands will be closed until Jan. 14 starting Sunday, caretaker Prime Minister Mark Rutte said at a hastily arranged press conference Saturday night. Schools and universities will shut until Jan. 9, he said.

In what is surely to prove a major disappointment, the lockdown terms also rein in private holiday celebrations. Residents only will be permitted two visitors except for Christmas and New Year's, when four will be allowed, according to Rutte.

"The Netherlands is going into lockdown again from tomorrow," he said, adding that the move was "unavoidable because of the fifth wave caused by the omicron variant that is bearing down on us."

It wasn't just the Dutch seeking to slow the spread of omicron. Alarmed ministers in France, Cyprus and Austria tightened travel restrictions. Paris canceled its New Year's Eve fireworks. Denmark has closed theaters, concert halls, amusement parks and museums. Ireland imposed an 8 p.m. curfew on pubs and bars and limited attendance at indoor and outdoor events. London Mayor Sadiq Khan underscored the official concern about the climbing cases and their potential to overwhelm the health care system by declaring a major incident Saturday, a move that allows local councils in Britain's capital to coordinate work more closely with emergency services.

Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin captured the sense of the continent in an address to the nation, saying the new restrictions were

needed to protect lives and livelihoods from the resurgent virus.

"None of this is easy," Martin said Friday night. "We

pers fearing the worst swarmed to commercial areas of Dutch cities earlier Saturday, thinking it might be their last chance to buy

week, the government has reimposed a requirement for masks to be worn indoors and ordered people to show proof of vaccina-

are also accelerating the pace of booster shots after early data showed that two doses of vaccine were less effective against the omicron variant. Shopping centers, cathedrals and soccer stadiums in Britain have been converted into mass vaccination centers. Omicron is now the dominant coronavirus variant in London, and efforts were stepped up to reach people who haven't yet been vaccinated or boosted.

The mayor said during a visit to a mass vaccination pop-up clinic at London soccer team Chelsea's stadium that public services ranging from ambulances to police calls could be impeded by the rapidly spreading variant.

"The big issue we have is the number of Londoners who have this virus, and that's leading to big issues in relation to staff absences and the ability of our public services to run at the optimum levels," Khan told the BBC.

In France, the government announced that it will start giving the vaccine to children in the 5 to 11 age group beginning Wednesday.

Prime Minister Jean Castex said Friday that with the omicron variant spreading like "lightning," the government proposed requiring proof of vaccination from individuals entering restaurants, cafes and other public establishments. The action requires parliamentary approval.

Thousands of opponents of vaccine requirements and mask mandates protested Saturday in Hamburg, Berlin, Düsseldorf and other German cities. In Austria, local media reported the crowds swelled to tens of thousands. □



A protestor holds a banner during a small anti-COVID restriction demonstration in the Hague, the Netherlands, Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021.

Associated Press

are all exhausted with COVID and the restrictions it requires. The twists and turns, the disappointments and the frustrations take a heavy toll on everyone. But it is the reality that we are dealing with."

The World Health Organization reported Saturday that the omicron variant of the coronavirus has been detected in 89 countries, and COVID-19 cases involving the variant are doubling every 1.5 to 3 days in places with community transmission and not just infections acquired abroad.

Major questions about omicron remain unanswered, including how effective existing COVID-19 vaccines are against it and whether the variant produces severe illness in many infected individuals, WHO noted. Yet omicron's "substantial growth advantage" over the delta variant means it is likely to soon overtake delta as the dominant form of the virus in countries where the new variant is spreading locally, the U.N. health agency said.

In the Netherlands, shop-

Christmas gifts.

Rotterdam municipality tweeted that it was "too busy in the center" of the port city and told people: "Don't come to the city." Amsterdam also warned that the city's main shopping street was busy and urged people to stick to coronavirus rules.

"I can hear the whole of the Netherlands sighing," Rutte said in his lockdown announcement. "All this, exactly one week before Christmas. Another Christmas that is completely different from what we want. Very bad news again for all those businesses and cultural institutions that rely on the holidays."

The head of the Dutch public health institute, Jaap van Dissel, described the shutdown as a preventative move that would "buy time" for more people to get booster vaccines and for the nation's health care system to prepare for a possible new surge in infections.

In the U.K., where confirmed daily cases soared to record numbers this

tion or a recent negative coronavirus test when going to nightclubs and large events.

But the moves caused anger.

Critics of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's latest coronavirus restrictions flooded Oxford Street, a popular London shopping area, on Saturday. The maskless protesters blew whistles, yelled "Freedom!" and told passersby to remove their face coverings. Hundreds of people blocked traffic as they marched with signs bearing slogans such as "Vaccine passports kill our freedoms" and "Don't comply." Other signs had the faces of Johnson or U.K. Health Secretary Sajid Javid and read, "Give them the boot."

Scientists are warning the British government it needs to go further to prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed. Leaked minutes from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies suggested a ban on indoor mixing and hospitality, the BBC reported.

Britain and other nations



Islamic world pitches ways to aid desperately poor Afghans



Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, center, speaks during the 17th extraordinary session of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers, in Islamabad, Pakistan, Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021.

By **KATHY GANNON**
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Islamic countries scrambled on Sunday to find ways to help Afghanistan avert an imminent economic collapse they say would have a “horrendous” global impact.

The hastily called meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Islamabad ended with a promise to set up a fund to provide humanitarian aid through the Islamic Development Bank, which would provide a cover for countries to donate without dealing directly with the country’s Taliban rulers.

In a press conference at the end of the summit, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi also described what he called good news from the United States, whose special representative on Afghanistan, Tom West, attended the summit.

He said West met with the Taliban delegation led by the interim foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on the sidelines. Qureshi said West also said he was mandated to “engage” with the Taliban, that U.S. humanitarian aid to Afghanistan would not carry preconditions and there could be as much as \$1.2 billion avail-

able through the World Bank in money that could be released to Afghanistan.

There was no immediate response from the U.S. to Qureshi’s statements.

There has been a growing call for the U.S. and other countries to release upward of \$10 billion in frozen Afghan assets. However, previously the U.S. has said at least some of that money is tied up in litigation involving the survivors and the families of victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks carried out by al Qaida while being harbored in Afghanistan by the Taliban during their previous rule.

Sunday’s summit brought together dozens of foreign ministers as well as the special representatives on Afghanistan of major powers, including China, the U.S. and Russia. It also included the U.N. undersecretary general on humanitarian affairs, and the president of the Islamic Development Bank Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser, who offered several concrete financing proposals. He said the IDB can manage trusts that could be used to move money into Afghanistan, jumpstart businesses and help salvage the deeply troubled economy.

At the outset of the sum-

mit, several participating nations called for a quick opening of the country’s banking system and collectively, with the United Nations and international banking institutions, to provide assistance to Afghanistan. Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan directed his remarks to the U.S., urging Washington to drop preconditions for releasing desperately needed funds and restarting Afghanistan’s banking systems.

Khan seemed to offer Taliban a pass on their limits on education for girls, urging the world to understand “cultural sensitivities” and saying human rights and women’s rights meant different things in different countries. Still other speakers, including the OIC chairman Hussain Ibrahim Taha, emphasized the need for the protection of human rights, particularly those of women and girls.

“This gathering is about the Afghan people,” said Qureshi, who warned that without immediate aid, Afghanistan was certain to collapse.

The consequences would be “horrendous,” he said, not just in Afghan lives lost to starvation and disease — but also what would most certainly create a mass exodus of Afghans.

He predicted chaos would spread, allowing terrorism and the drug trade to flourish.

Martin Griffiths, the U.N. undersecretary for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, warned that Afghanistan cannot survive on donations alone. He urged donor countries to show flexibility, allowing their money to pay salaries of public sector workers and support “basic services such as health, education, electricity, livelihoods, to allow the people of Afghanistan some chance to get through this winter and some encouragement to remain home with their families.”

Beyond that, Griffiths said, “we need constructive engagement with the de facto authorities to clarify what we expect from each other.”

Afghanistan’s teetering economy, he added, requires decisive and compassionate action, or “I fear that this fall will pull down the entire population.”

Griffiths said families simply do not have the cash for everyday purchases like food and fuel, as prices soar. The cost of fuel is up by around 40%, and most families spend 80% of their money just to buy food. He rattled off a number of

stark statistics.

“Universal poverty may reach 97% of the population of Afghanistan. That could be the next grim milestone,” he warned. “Within a year, 30% of Afghanistan’s GDP (gross domestic product) could be lost altogether, while male unemployment may double to 29%.”

Next year the U.N. would be asking for \$4.5 billion in aid for Afghanistan — it’s single largest humanitarian aid request, he said.

In what appeared to be a message to the Taliban delegation, Qureshi and subsequent speakers, including Taha, emphasized the protection of human rights, particularly those of women and girls.

In an interview with The Associated Press last week, Muttaqi said that Afghanistan’s new rulers were committed to the education of girls and women in the workforce.

Yet four months into Taliban rule, girls are not allowed to attend high school in most provinces, and though women have returned to their jobs in much of the health care sector, many female civil servants have been barred from coming to work.

At the summit’s conclusion Qureshi said the OIC agreed to appoint a special representative on Afghanistan. The 20 foreign ministers and 10 deputy foreign ministers in attendance also agreed to establish a greater partnership with the United Nations to get help to desperate Afghans.

They participants also emphasized the critical need to open Afghanistan’s banking facilities, which have been largely closed since the Taliban takeover on Aug. 15. The Taliban has limited withdrawals from the country’s banks to \$200 a month.

“We collectively feel that we have to unlock the financial and banking channels because the economy cannot function and people cannot be held without banking services,” Qureshi said. □

Mass anti-coup protests in Sudan mark uprising anniversary



People take part in a protest against the October military takeover and a subsequent deal that reinstated Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok but sidelined the movement in Khartoum, Sudan, Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021.

Associated Press

By SAMY MAGDY
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Sudanese took to the streets in the capital of Khartoum and elsewhere across the country for mass protests Sunday against an October military takeover and a subsequent deal that reinstated Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok but sidelined the movement.

The demonstrations mark the third anniversary of the uprising that eventually forced the military removal of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir and his Islamist government in April 2019. Sudan then followed a fragile path toward democracy and ruled by a joint military-civilian government. The October 25 coup has rattled the transition and led to relentless street protests. Video footage circulated online purported to show

tens of thousands of protesters marching in the streets of Khartoum and its twin city of Omdurman on Sunday. Protesters were seen waving the Sudanese flag and white ones with printed images of those killed in the uprising and ensuing protests. Ahead of the demonstrations, Sudan's authorities tightened security across the capital, barricading government and military buildings to prevent protesters from reaching the military's headquarters and the presidential palace. They also blocked major roads and bridges linking Khartoum and Omdurman across the Nile River. Security forces used tear gas to disperse protesters headed toward the palace on the bank of the Blue Nile in the heart of Khartoum, according to activist Nazim Sirag. The Sudan Doctors Committee

said some protesters were injured, but didn't provide a tally. Activists described chaotic scenes, with many protesters rushing to side streets from the tear gas. Later, footage showed protesters at one of the palace's gates chanting: "The people want the downfall of the regime" — a slogan heard in the Arab Spring uprisings that began in late 2010. Those movements forced the removal

of leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. The Sudanese Professionals' Association, which spearheaded the uprising against al-Bashir, called on protesters to gather outside the palace and block roads with make-shift barricades. There were also protests in elsewhere in the country, such as the coastal city of Port Sudan and the northern city of Atbara, the birthplace of the upris-

ing against al-Bashir. The protests were called by the pro-democracy movement that led the uprising against al-Bashir and stuck a power-sharing deal with the generals in the months that followed his ouster. Relations between the generals and the civilians in the transitional government were shaky and capped by the military's Oct. 25 takeover that removed Hamdok's government. □



NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED!

**NAAT (Abott ID):
Result in 30 minutes!**

**PCR / Antigen Test
SAME DAY RESULT!**

Tel: (+297) 280-0630
info@medcare.aw / www.medcare.aw

Locations: **The Cove Mall (8:00 AM - 6:00 PM)** **Medcare near Courtyard by Marriott (8:00 AM - 2:00 PM)**

Test today, fly tomorrow during the holidays

PALM BEACH — MedCare's Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Centers has improved its services when it comes to turn around time for results. As of November its offering same day test results (previously it was 24 hours) on both PCR and Antigen tests

This in part is to comply with the updated December 6, CDC requirement for travel to the United States, where all air passengers, regardless of vaccination status, must show a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than 1 day before travel to the United States.

MedCare Fit2Fly Testing Center at the Cove Mall is opposite the Holiday Inn and is open every day for walk-ins from 8 AM through 6 PM. MedCare's other location is situated at The Courtyard by Marriott Aruba Resort, is across the street from the RIU Hotel and is open every day from 8:00 AM until 2 PM. These two locations are at a stone's throw from your resort, condominium, or other vacation accommodation. Walk-ins are welcome.

MedCare Clinic, a high-quality medical clinic that specializes in urgent care for tourists and that has been appointed as the national COVID-19 clinic for tourists, and Laboratorio di Servizio, a full-service modern medical laboratory with state-of-the-art equipment, have partnered up to provide fast and reliable



COVID-19 testing to all. Laboratorio di Servizio is ISO-15189:2012

accredited by the Dutch Council for Accreditation (M317).

For your convenience

For a selection of resorts in Aruba, MedCare has setup Testing Centers on site:

- Divi All Inclusive, Divi Dutch Village Beach Resort, Divi Golf, Divi Tamarijn
- Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort
- The Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort
- Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort and Casino
- Renaissance Wind Creek Aruba Resort
- The Ritz-Carlton Resort.

Please contact your front desk for more information on our Testing Centers at these properties. Private bookings

For your convenience, Medcare also offers private testing at your accommodation/hotel room for a one-time service fee of \$120. This fee covers testing up to 10 people (one appointment, at one location and a specific time). Additional persons will be charged \$10 per person. Regular testing fees applies. ☐

For more information, please contact:

Phone: +297 280 0630
Open 7 days a week, 7 AM – 7 PM.
Email: info@medcare.aw
MedCare Clinic Aruba -
Medcare Test Center

Follow us on social media:
MedCare Clinic | Facebook





playa linda
beach resort

YOUR PLACE IN THE SUN
RESORT OWNERSHIP AT
ARUBA FINEST TIMESHARE RESORT

Playa Linda Sales Office: Mon-Fri (8am-4pm)
sales@playalinda.com or call (+297)-586-1000
Toll free number: 1-888-281-4544

Aruba to me..... Christmas Edition



ORANJESTAD — You are here for Christmas or New Year and we would like to portrait you! Send a Christmas and Happy New Year greeting to your loved ones, friends or colleagues back home.

Complete the sentence: Holiday Greeting from Merry Aruba to

Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish this between December 22nd and 31st.

Isn't that a special way to show your loved ones that even though you are far apart you are still close at heart everyday.

Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a holiday greeting from **Karen and Donny Feldman** from Lynnfield, Massachusetts.

They say:
" **Holiday Greeting from Merry Aruba to all our friends and family in the USA**" ☐

COVID-19 Status on Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Rules and protocols are being reviewed and evaluated on a daily basis and adapted as per current situation by a crisis team, in order to protect each and every one visiting and residing our island.

Covid Status:

There are currently 259 active cases. 218 are residents and 41 non-residents. 180 deceased. There are 8 persons hospitalized in Aruba of which 5 are in ICU. Due to lack of staff at the hospital they have to send patients over to Colombia for treatment. There are currently 6 persons at the ICU in Colombia.

Vaccination Status:

A total of 84,191 of the total population has been vaccinated of which 78,627 persons received both shots of the vaccine and 5,564 received only the first shot. Children as young as 12 years are being vaccinated. For the senior population of 60 years and older a total of 21,794 received both shots and 995 received only the first shot. Aruba is administering booster shots

to persons 55 and older

The measures are as follows:

- Curfew: Eliminated.
- Closing Time: 1:00 am for all business for the exception of Casino's which can stay open till 2:00 am
- Restaurants: Max. 8 people per table.
- Social Activities and Sports: Max. people: 90 indoors, 125 outdoors.
- Funerals: Max. people: 125 (if the space is adequately large enough)
- Area Ban 7:00 pm - 5:00 am
- Nightlife: Dancing is not permitted
- Entertainment: Max 5 musicians on stage.
- Gathering Ban: Max. 6 people.

The following measures remain applicable:

- Masks: Use of masks is mandatory inside at all establishments.
- Alcohol: Ban of alcohol on public roads: 24 hours.
- Social Distancing: Continue maintaining social distance. ☐

MOVE IN READY!!

HARBOUR HOUSE
Aruba

THE NEW DOWNTOWN LIVING
With the Most Spectacular View
Don't Miss Out 85% Already Sold!!
Visit us and check it out for yourself

(+297) 594 6395

Weststraat 2 | O'Stad, Aruba | sales@harbourhousearuba.com
WWW.HARBOURHOUSEARUBA.COM



Explore Aruba's Newest Rooftop Restaurant

Serving Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

OPEN DAILY FROM 7AM

[f](#) [@](#) @radissonbluaruba | T: 526-5000 | concierge@radissonbluaruba.com

Jewish community to celebrate completion of Chabad Aruba's first ever Torah Scroll

NOORD—The Jewish community of Aruba will be completing and welcoming a Torah scroll -- Judaism's most sacred object -- with a unique and celebratory ceremony on Wednesday December 22nd. The celebration will begin at the Ritz-Carlton, Aruba and end with a procession accompanying the Torah to its new home at the Chabad Jewish Center of Aruba.

An expert ritual scribe will ink the final letters of the

magnificent scroll, as done 3,300 years ago for the very first time by Moses. Following the completion of the Torah, the sacred scroll will be taken to the streets under a traditional canopy in a joyous procession that will include live music, torches and dancing.

An authentic Torah scroll is a mind-boggling masterpiece of labor and skill. Comprising between 62 and 84 sheets of parchment - cured, tanned, scraped and prepared ac-

ording to exact Torah law specifications, and containing exactly 304,805 letters, the resulting handwritten scroll takes months to complete

. Timeless dictums hold for a certified Torah scribe and everything from the character of the scribe to the quality of the parchment and type of ink are taken into account. The slightest error voids the entire 54-portion parchment.

"This new Torah scroll is an appropriate and ex-



NOW AVAILABLE!

BlueAruba Realty

Luxury Penthouse at Eagle Beach

Two levels of spectacular ocean views and all the great amenities Blue Residences has to offer

WWW.BLUEARUBAREALTY.COM | SALES@BLUEARUBAREALTY.COM | +1 (297)594 6395

citing addition to the local Chabad community center, as it represents the unbroken chain of Jewish tradition and survival" said Rabbi Ahron Blasberg, director of Chabad Aruba, the organization which has commissioned the scribe and will be hosting the event. "The ancient wisdom contained in this scroll has timeless messages that directs our Jewish life to this day and is the essence of our identity as Jews. Possessing our very own Torah scroll is a cause for great pride and celebration."

For more information and to participate in this special event please visit www.JewishAruba.com/Torah

Chabad of Aruba is dedicated to providing every Jew regardless of background, philosophy or level of commitment, an open door environment for strengthening and enhancing Jewish family life. For more information on Jewish life in Aruba please visit www.JewishAruba.com.

Restaurants anxious as omicron, high food costs take toll

By DEE-ANN DURBIN, MAE ANDERSON and SYLVIA HUI
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — While restaurants in the U.S. and United Kingdom are open without restrictions and often bustling, they are entering their second winter of the coronavirus pandemic anxious about what's ahead: They're squeezed by labor shortages and skyrocketing food costs and the omicron variant is looming.

"I'm extremely worried. I've never felt like we were out of the woods," said Caroline Glover, chef and owner of the restaurant Annette in the Denver suburb of Aurora.

The rapid spread of omicron already is pummeling the industry in Britain and elsewhere, with restaurants, hotels and pubs reporting cancellations at the busiest and most lucrative time of year.

Businesses urged the U.K. government to offer relief after officials warned people to think carefully about socializing. Scotland and Wales have pledged millions of pounds for businesses, adding pressure for Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government to do the same in England.

"It's pretty devastating. For private hires, bigger tables of say eight to 16 people, those have pretty much disappeared. These are the bread and butter for restaurants at Christmastime," said Jeff Galvin, co-owner of Galvin Restaurants, a group of five upmarket venues in London.

Many businesses said hundreds of festive corporate lunch bookings vanished almost overnight as infections began to soar and Johnson announced tighter restrictions, including mandatory mask-wearing in most indoor spaces, though restaurants are open as usual.

Glover in Colorado worries about renewed restrictions if infections climb. For now, business has returned, with her dining room back to full capacity — up from a cap of 50% last year — and four greenhouses outside

booked far in advance. Similarly, diners have returned and business is

dusty, she said. But she can't hike menu prices enough to compensate.

Needham, Massachusetts, said she's comfortable dining indoors with her fam-

a financial relief plan soon. About 30% of the chain's bookings canceled last week.

"There are thousands of businesses — not just pubs — that could collapse in January if the current situation isn't partnered with proper financial support," he said.

UKHospitality, an industry trade group, urged tax relief, saying concerns about omicron have wiped out 2 billion pounds (\$2.6 billion) in sales this month.

Restaurants also are clamoring for government support in the U.S., where the Restaurant Revitalization Fund ran dry earlier this year after dispersing \$28.6 billion to 100,000 applicants.

Sean Kennedy, executive vice president for public policy at the National Restaurant Association, said the industry needs at least \$40 billion to fund the 200,000 applicants who didn't receive grants. So far, Congress hasn't taken action.

It's harder for restaurants to explain what's happening now that their dining rooms are full and they're not on lockdown, Kennedy said.

"They think that we're fully packed and crushing it, but the answer is, we are barely getting by," he said.

Lindsay Mescher, who opened the Greenhouse Cafe in Lebanon, Ohio, in 2019, is frustrated that she never received a promised government grant. She was approved in May, but demand was so high the fund was exhausted before she received any money.

She took out loans to keep her staff of eight employed while offering only carryout for the first 16 months of the pandemic.

The cafe reopened to diners this year and had a busy summer and fall, but Mescher is still struggling. She used to pay \$165.77 for a case of 400 takeout salad bowls, for example; now they cost \$246.75.

"The funds would have guaranteed survival for us," Mescher said. "It's extremely unfair that some restaurants got relief and some didn't." □



Amy Brandwein, chef and owner of Centrolina, prepares a dish in her restaurant kitchen, Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

strong for Amy Brandwein, who owns the Italian restaurant Centrolina and a small cafe, Piccolina, in Washington. After her restaurants survived lockdowns with takeout and grocery offerings, "I could safely say we're back to 2019 levels," she said.

But staffing remains a challenge. In a recent survey of 3,000 U.S. restaurant operators, 77% said they didn't have enough workers to meet demand, according to the National Restaurant Association, an industry trade group.

Many restaurant workers started new careers or went back to school. Jada Sartor of Grand Rapids, Michigan, saw her wages rise from \$10 per hour to \$16 per hour this year as restaurants grew more desperate for workers, but she recently quit her serving job because she couldn't find affordable child care.

"The cost of living is just so high you can't afford to really live," she said.

Kristin Jonna, owner of restaurant and wine bar Vinology in Ann Arbor, Michigan, said she raised wages nearly 40% to attract and retain her staff of 35. It was a change that needed to happen in the service in-

"Everyone knows that beef is more expensive, but high-end, highly skilled labor is expensive, too," Jonna said. "That is the very tricky part of our business right now."

Jonna said the restaurant is humming despite high COVID-19 caseloads in Michigan. She has fewer large events scheduled, but the customers who are coming in are spending more.

U.S. sales at restaurants and bars hit an estimated \$73.7 billion in November, up 37% from the same month last year, according to preliminary data from the U.S. Census Bureau. But that was partly due to higher menu prices as restaurants try to account for inflation. Sara Lund, owner of Bodega and The Rest, a bar and restaurant in Salt Lake City, Utah, said her ingredient costs rose between 15% and 40% this year.

"The margins on food are never going to be astronomical, even in good times," she said. "But paying 40% more for protein? I can't pass that along to the customer."

Diners know restaurants are struggling, and many say they have resumed eating out to help their favorite local spots. Liz Cooper of

ily of five, all of whom are vaccinated except for her 4-year-old daughter.

"If you like a restaurant and a small business you should get out there and support them," Cooper said. "They might have to close, and then you'll be heartbroken that you can't get your favorite chicken parm or cannoli."

Steve Geffen, who owns four Chicago-area restaurants, including Once Upon a Grill, said he removed 30% of the tables from his restaurants to ensure customers felt comfortable dining inside. So far, it's working.

"They don't mind waiting longer, knowing they're not sitting on top of everybody else," he said.

But Jeanne Busch in Forest Park, Illinois, is sticking with occasional takeout.

"I am definitely not comfortable maskless indoors in a crowd," Busch said. "As we head into winter and omicron continues its rampage, we expect mostly to be eating at home."

In Britain, omicron has already devastated restaurants and pubs. Patrick Dardis, who heads the Young's chain of some 220 pubs, said he hoped officials would come up with

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 40 Put into

1 Head piles honcho

5 Lt.'s superior flower

9 Christmas Eve traveler

10 Medal, for example

12 Parcel out

13 Contradict

14 Pizza servings

16 Top card

17 Goose sound

18 One given to idle chatter

21 Had a meal

22 Moves smoothly

23 "...eight — a-

24 Royal heir

26 Gorilla, for one

29 Icebox, updated

30 Pet pest

31 Equip

32 Fruitcake ingredients

34 Earthy pigment

37 "— Lucy"

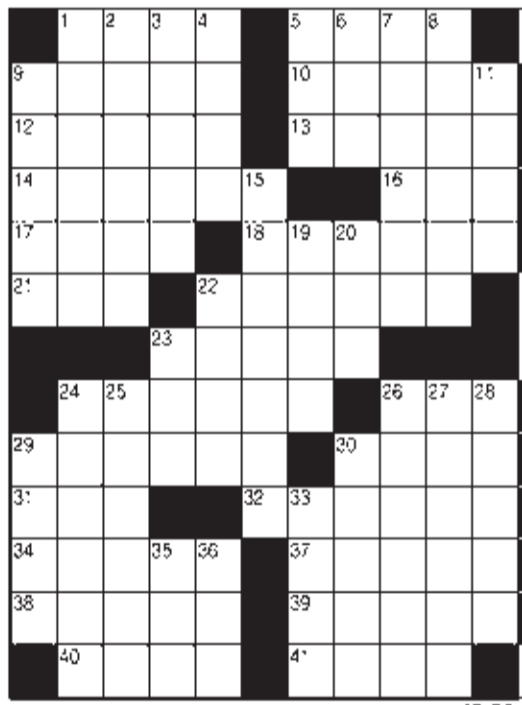
38 Paris subway

39 North Pole workers

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | I | R | E | | H | E | A | R | T | |
| O | M | E | N | S | | E | L | M | E | R |
| S | P | A | D | E | | M | I | A | M | I |
| C | O | D | E | N | S | | Z | I | P | |
| A | R | E | T | H | A | | M | E | S | S |
| | T | R | E | E | T | O | A | D | S | |
| | | T | R | A | C | Y | | | | |
| | F | R | E | E | L | O | A | D | S | |
| B | E | E | S | | I | N | S | E | C | T |
| O | L | D | | P | E | N | | C | A | R |
| A | I | S | L | E | | O | H | A | R | A |
| S | N | O | O | P | | R | I | D | E | S |
| T | E | X | T | S | | M | E | S | H | |

Saturday's answer

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 3 Market buy | 11 Sleigh pullers | 26 Statue setting |
| 4 Fill completely | 15 Joins together | 27 Irritated |
| 5 Taxi | 19 Carnival carefully | 28 Moves |
| 6 Reverent wonder | 20 Spots on TV | 29 Gift tag word |
| 7 Sense of taste | 22 Work crew | 33 Diner |
| 8 Brief times | 23 Central desserts | 35 Make mistakes |
| 9 Daughter of Barack and Michelle | 24 Catalog info | 36 Turn bad |
| 11 Sleigh pullers | 15 Joins together | 26 Statue setting |
| 19 Carnival carefully | 20 Spots on TV | 27 Irritated |
| 22 Work crew | 23 Central desserts | 28 Moves |
| 24 Catalog info | 25 "Yes indeedy!" | 29 Gift tag word |
| 30 French girl | 33 Diner | 35 Make mistakes |
| 36 Turn bad | | |



A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-20

CRYPTOQUOTE

Z ' O Y O Y S W K X Z O A Q I

V Y S E X — Y Q Q Z V Y S E Z X O L

X R Y C I W K E R I H I X E E R I C I

Z X . — V Z Q Q Z Y O K I Y E R I C

Saturday's Cryptoquote: A HOUSE IS BEAUTIFUL NOT BECAUSE OF ITS WALLS, BUT BECAUSE OF ITS CAKES. — RUSSIAN SAYING

Spidey nets 3rd best opening of all time with \$253 million



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Tom Holland in Columbia Pictures' "Spider-Man: No Way Home."

Associated Press

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

Never underestimate your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man, even with a mutating virus afoot. Despite rising concerns over the omicron variant, "Spider-Man: No Way Home" not only shattered pandemic-era box office records; it became the third best opening of all time behind "Avengers: Endgame" (\$357.1 million) and "Avengers: Infinity War" (\$257.7 million).

The Sony and Marvel blockbuster grossed a stunning \$253 million in ticket sales from 4,325 North American locations, according to studio estimates on Sunday, also setting a record for the month of December. The web-slinger's success couldn't have come sooner for a movie business that has had a rollercoaster 2021 and could be headed for a difficult start to 2022 as the omicron variant of the coronavirus forces more and more event cancellations.

"This weekend's historic 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' results, from all over the world and in the face of many challenges, reaffirm the unmatched cul-

tural impact that exclusive theatrical films can have when they are made and marketed with vision and resolve," said Tom Rothman, Sony Pictures Chairman and CEO, in a statement. "All of us at Sony Pictures are deeply grateful to the fabulous talent, both in front of and behind the camera, that produced such a landmark film."

In its five days playing in theaters internationally, it's amassed \$334.2 million in ticket sales, bringing its global total to \$587.2 million against a \$200 million production budget. The film has yet to open in markets like Thailand and Japan, and there is no release date set for China.

As the third standalone Spider-Man film in the Tom Holland era, "No Way Home" was always going to be an "event film" for fans. After several delays over the year Sony planted its launch in the pre-Christmas frame and as of late last week had anticipated a pandemic-best opening in the \$130 to \$150 million range. But it quickly became clear that "Spider-Man" was going to fly much higher.

The film netted an incred-

ible \$121.5 million in its first day — bumping "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" out of the No. 2 position.

Directed by Jon Watts, "No Way Home" picks up with Holland's Peter Parker grappling with the world finding out about his superhero identity, and features Zendaya, Marisa Tomei and Benedict Cumberbatch as Doctor Strange. The promise of spoiler reveals only added to the feverish hype that led to lines and sell-out showings across the country.

"For the target audience, this is absolute must-see, required viewing," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "There is no way fans were going to opt out because of omicron."

Many moviegoers also shelled out top dollar to see the film on the biggest screens possible. According to IMAX, an estimated \$36.2 million of the global total is from their large format screens.

"'Spider-Man: No Way Home' is an exclamation point on the comeback we've seen at the box office in 2021," said Rich Gelfond, CEO of IMAX. "With these historic results, IMAX continues to see blockbuster releases generate box office at or exceeding pre-pandemic levels."

And it's not just fans who have been giving the film good marks: Reviews have been overwhelmingly positive as well. It has a 94% "fresh" rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

Holland on Instagram thanked audiences for the record numbers.

"You made this possible. Your love and support means the world to me," Holland wrote on Saturday. "Thank you thank you thank you and if you haven't seen Spider-Man no way home yet... merry Christmas and you know what to do."

Before this weekend, Sony's "Venom: Let There Be Carnage" held the record for best opening of the pandemic with \$90.1 million. □

Honey Dolls
MASSAGE AND ESCORT SERVICE

Beautiful Latin Girls
Pick-up & Delivery

Serving Men - Couple - Women - All Genders

+297 565-9535

WWW.PLEASUREINARUBA.COM

NASA confirms next Friday for Webb Space Telescope launch

By **MARCIA DUNN**
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA is shooting for next Friday — Christmas Eve — to launch its newest space telescope.

NASA Administrator Bill Nelson confirmed Friday that the James Webb Space Telescope will attempt to blast off on Dec. 24. A European Ariane rocket will provide the lift from South America's French Guiana. The \$10 billion Webb — considered the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope — was supposed to soar Saturday, but was jolted by a clamp during launch preparations, resulting in a four-day delay. Then a bad communication link on the rocket had to be fixed, postponing the launch another two days. U.S. and European space officials signed off Friday on the launch date, following one last round of testing. Nelson expects a smaller crowd at the launch site because of the holidays. Liftoff is scheduled for 7:20 a.m. EST.

"Since it's Christmas Eve, all the congressional delegations that were going down, all of that has evaporated," he told The Associated Press. Even the NASA and contractor team has dwindled, he noted. But he'll be there. Already years late in fly-



In this Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021 photo released by the European Space Agency, NASA's James Webb Space Telescope is secured on top of the Ariane 5 rocket that will launch it to space from Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana.

Associated Press

ing, Webb will look back to almost the beginning of time, to when the first stars and galaxies were forming, while also examining the atmospheres of planets orbiting stars closer to home. NASA is partnering with the European and Canadian space agencies on the mega project.

"There's so much riding on this," Nelson said, "opening up just all kinds of new understanding and revelations about the universe." Is there a better Christmas present than seeing the telescope launch? Nelson answered by break-

ing into song: "All I want for Christmas are not my two front teeth, but for the success of JWST" -- referring to the telescope by its acronym. □

ARUBA TODAY
BONDIA

How to reach us!

Downtown

Editor
Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Assistant Director
Xiomara Arends

Editors
Liza Koolman (Management assistant)
Richard Brooks

Sales
Linda Reijnders
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds
classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection
accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website
Juan Luis Pinto
Pilar Flores

Columnists
Anthony Croes

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
@arubatoday

Divi Links Golf
 Studio, ocean view \$950
 26 dec. - 02 jan.
 Call: 564 2686

Costa Linda 2 Bedr
 week 53
 5 nights \$2400
 02 dec. - 07 dec.
 Call: 564 2686

Rental Timeshare
 Caribbean Palm Village
 2 Bedroom week 52
 Dec. 25 - Jan. 1, 2022
 Price: \$3,000
 Call: 5638366



Marriott Aruba Surf Club
PLATINUM SEASON
 2 Bed Oceanfront \$25,000
 2 Bed Oceanside \$17,500
 2 Bed Ocean view \$16,500
 2 Bed Garden view \$15,500
 3 Bed Ocean view \$28,000
 WK 51 Oceanside \$52,000
 WK 52 Oceanside \$55,000
 WK 7 and 14 - all views
GOLD SEASON
 2 Bed Oceanfront \$14,000
 2 Bed Oceanside \$11,000
 2 Bed Ocean view \$8,000
 2 Bed Garden view \$6,000
 3 Bed Ocean view \$13,000

Marriott Aruba Ocean Club
PLATINUM SEASON
 2 Bed Oceanfront \$29,000
 2 Bed Ocean view \$18,000
 1 Bed ocean front \$13,000
 1 Bed ocean view \$11,000
GOLD SEASON
 2 Bed Oceanfront \$14,000
 2 Bed Ocean view \$9,500
 1 Bed oceanfront \$9,000
 1 Bed ocean View \$6,500

** Destination Points \$8.00 per point

La Cabana Beach Resort
 1 Bed wk 51 \$6,500

Divi Aruba Phoenix
 1 bed wk 20 unit 633 \$11,000
 2 bed wk 11 unit 101 ground floor
 expires 2037 \$17,400
 Other weeks are also available.

We are the #1 Rental Timeshare agent for Aruba!

We also RENT Aruba weeks for owners, Contact us to BUY, SELL or RENT any timeshare property.

Contact:
stephanier@conciergerealty.com
888-888-2204 Ext 109
Website:
www.conciergerealty.com
Broker: Stephanie Reidel
 www.facebook.com/groups/MarriottArubaSurf/
 www.facebook.com/groups/MarriottArubaOcean

HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad
 Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
 Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas
 Imsan 24 hours
 Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:
 Dakota Tel. 588 7364
San Nicolas:
 San Nicolas Tel. 584 5712

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

| | |
|----------------|----------|
| Police | 100 |
| Oranjestad | 527 3140 |
| Noord | 527 3200 |
| Sta. Cruz | 527 2900 |
| San Nicolas | 584 5000 |
| Police Tipline | 11141 |
| Ambulancia | 911 |
| Fire Dept. | 115 |
| Red Cross | 582 2219 |

TAXI SERVICES

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| Taxi Tas | 587 5900 |
| Prof. Taxi | 588 0035 |
| Taxi D.T.S. | 587 2300 |
| Taxi Serv. Aruba | 583 3232 |
| A1 Taxi Serv. | 280 2828 |

TRAVEL INFO

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Aruba Airport | 524 2424 |
| American Airlines | 582 2700 |
| Avianca | 588 0059 |
| Jet Blue | 588 2244 |
| Surinam | 582 7896 |

AID FOUNDATIONS

FAVI- Visually Impaired
 Tel. 582 5051

Alcoholics Anonymous
 Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous
 Tel. 583 8989

Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes
 Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention
 Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

General Info

Phone Directory Tel. 118

Like us on Facebook

facebook.com/arubatoday/

Tiger & son's 11 straight birdies fall short of Daly duo

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
AP Golf Writer

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Tiger Woods might not be ready for four-level golf. He can still deliver quite a show.

In a remarkable return from a car crash 10 months ago that badly damaged his right leg, Woods and 12-year-old son Charlie set a tournament record with 11 straight birdies and pushed John Daly and his college son all the way to the finish Sunday in the PNC Championship.

Daly and John Daly II, a freshman at Arkansas, shot 57 in the scramble format and won by two shots. It might have been the widest Woods ever smiled after a runner-up finish.

"The fact that I'm able to have this opportunity this year — even a couple weeks ago we didn't really know whether or not I would be doing this," Woods said. "But here we are. And we had just best time ever."

The birdie streak began on the seventh hole when Woods hit a half-wedge into a foot. Charlie holed a 10-footer on the next hole, stooping to pick up the marker before the ball was even in the cup, another moment where the confident son looked a lot like his father.

It was like that over the final two hours, Woods often hitting the key irons and Charlie making the putts. They briefly had the lead after a



Tiger Woods smiles while walking on the second green during the second round of the PNC Championship golf tournament Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021, in Orlando, Fla.

Associated Press

birdie on the 14th and the margin was thin the rest of the way until the very end. Daly, playing two groups behind, birdied the 16th hole to regain the lead. He and his son stayed in front when Team Woods chipped too strong on the par-5 closing hole and each of them missed 8-foot birdie putts. They shot 57 with only four pars, two of them on par 5s.

"We thought we'd have to birdie every hole on the back nine, and it turned out to be that way," Woods said. "But man, what a blast it was. We just had a blast all day."

Daly and son two-putted for birdie on the 18th and

set the record that mattered. They finished at 27-under par, breaking by one the mark set by Davis Love III and his son three years ago.

"Yesterday, it was all him. I putted so bad," Daly said. "I finally hit some decent shots. He played unbelievable. I played a little better today. I made him happy." The most famous encounter between Woods and Daly was in 2005 at Harding Park in a World Golf Championship, which ended in a playoff when Daly three-putted from 15 feet.

Woods was charging again — Tiger and Charlie — except Team Daly didn't flinch. Daly hit 7-iron into

the wind to short range on the 16th for birdie, and he coaxed in a 4-foot par putt on the 17th to stay ahead. The most popular off-season event that pairs major champions and a family member suddenly felt tense on a warm Florida afternoon, all because of Woods and everything that led to him playing again. Woods suffered multiple injuries to his right leg on Feb. 23 when his SUV traveling about 85 mph crashed through a median and down a hill in the Los Angeles suburbs.

He said amputation was a possibility. It took three months for him to get on his feet with help of crutches.

And he ended the year in a Sunday red shirt, holing birdie putts and delivering short irons that led to one birdie after another and a chase that felt like old times.

This wasn't just about Woods. His son, playing this event for the second straight year, delivered the goods down the stretch, particularly a 5-iron to 4 feet on the par-3 17th that gave them a tie for the lead going to the 18th.

Team Daly held it steady behind them.

It was only one month ago when Woods first posted a three-second video showing him hitting a short iron with the message, "Making progress." He was hitting balls at the back of the range at Albany in the Bahamas two weeks ago. He was able to ride a cart at the Ritz-Carlton Golf Club Orlando, which helped him get by in the 36-hole event on a flat course.

He kept insisting that playing at a high level against the best players in the world is still a long way and a lot of work ahead of him.

But there was no shortage of birdies, big shots and loads of hopes for a fairy tale ending.

"The competitive juices, they are never going to go away," Woods said. "This is my environment. This is what I've done my entire life. I'm just so thankful to be able to have this opportunity to do it again." □



Baylor's NaLyssa Smith (1) and Michigan's Naz Hillmon (0) look for a rebound in the first half of an NCAA college basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021, in Uncasville, Conn.

Associated Press

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
AP Basketball Writer

The Washington Mystics

have won the WNBA draft lottery for the first time in franchise history.

Washington Mystics win WNBA draft lottery for 1st time

Washington had the third best chance — 17.8% to get the top pick — and with star guard Natasha Cloud in attendance, the Mystics bucked the odds on Sunday.

"This is a huge moment for us," Mystics coach and general manager Mike Thibault said.

"I remember 10 years ago sitting and watching Sheila Johnson's face when I was still not with the team, when the team had the best odds, and she was sitting

there so sad when they got the fourth pick. ... So this is a changer for us."

"Although we did not get the first pick, we have two first-round picks and with this deep draft class, I am confident we will secure very talented players who will be great additions to our team," said Tamika Catchings, the Fever's vice president of basketball operations and general manager.

Washington had the first pick in the 1999 draft, but

there was no lottery back then. Chamique Holdsclaw was the Mystics' pick.

"We've been studying very carefully eight to 10 players and I don't know who we'll pick," Thibault said. "We're open to anything right now. I think the biggest thing is that you have to pick the best player."

NaLyssa Smith of Baylor could go No. 1. A few minutes after her fifth-ranked team lost to Michigan, Smith said she'd be thrilled to go to Washington. □

Steelers damage Titans' playoff hopes, help own with win

By The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Ben Roethlisberger ran for his first touchdown in three years, Chris Boswell kicked four field goals and the Pittsburgh Steelers kept their playoff hopes alive with a 19-13 win over Tennessee on Sunday.

The Steelers (7-6-1) forced the Titans (9-5) into four turnovers and needed every one of them to win for the second time in three games. The Titans let a winnable game slip away, trimming their lead over Indianapolis in the AFC South to one game.

Despite the miscues, Tennessee drove deep into Pittsburgh territory in the final moments, but wide receiver Nick Westbrook-Khine was tackled inches short of the first down at the Steelers 11 with 27 seconds to go. Pittsburgh remained in the mix in the muddled AFC North despite managing just 168 yards of total offense. Roethlisberger threw for 148 yards to move past Philip Rivers into fifth on the NFL's career yards passing list, but it was his legs — and Pittsburgh's resilient defense — that provided the difference.

Ten days after getting gashed in a loss to Minnesota, the Steelers responded by picking off Ryan Tannehill once and recovering three Tennessee fumbles. Each turnover led to field goals by Boswell, the final one a 48-yard kick with 4:34 to go.

COWBOYS 21, GIANTS 6

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J.

(AP) — Defensive end Demarcus Lawrence forced a fumble and made two other big plays that led to 15 points and the NFL-East leading Cowboys inched closer to a playoff berth.

Dak Prescott threw for a touchdown, Ezekiel Elliott scored on a 13-yard run and the defense forced four turnovers, including Trevon Diggs' NFL-leading 10th interception. The Cowboys (10-4) won their third straight. Greg Zuerlein added three field goals.

Graham Gano kicked field goals of 35 and 42 yards as the Giants (4-10) lost

their third straight game with backup Mike Glennon starting for the injured Daniel Jones (neck).

This game was not as close as the score. Dallas has four takeaways in three straight games for the ninth time in team history, and the first since 1994. The Cowboys never trailed and the Giants never looked threatening against a defense that also got interceptions from Jourdan Lewis and

Malik Hooker.

LIONS 30, CARDINALS 12

DETROIT (AP) — Kyler Murray's shaky performance against the team with the worst record in the NFL led to Arizona's first road loss of the season.

The Cardinals (10-4) started the day tied for the NFL's best record, but were coming off a loss to the Rams. The Lions (2-11-1) were mired at the bottom of the league standings before

the first snap.

Arizona missed its chance to get in the playoffs for the first time since 2015 with a win over a team it was favored to beat by nearly two touchdowns. The Cardinals can still earn a postseason berth during Week 15, but they'll need some other playoff contenders to lose. And in any scenario, Murray will have to play better. The third-year quarterback was 23 of 41 for 257 yards

with a touchdown and an interception, adding up to a 72.9 passer rating. Murray couldn't get away from the scrappy Lions when he tried to run, and finished with 3 yards rushing on four carries.

Detroit's Craig Reynolds ran for a career-high 112 yards and rookie receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown had 90 yards receiving, setting a season high for the second straight week, and a touchdown. □

Christmas Giveaway

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Live Music | For all existing members.
Doors Open 10:00 AM

Merry Christmas

\$10 Free Slot Play

Orchid Casino

Palm Beach, Aruba

Located at RIU Palace Antillas For more information call :525-7777 Or Follow us on



costa linda
beach resort

WE SEE SUNNY DAYS IN YOUR FUTURE
Meanwhile, stay safe. See you soon!

www.costalinda-aruba.com

Indulge yourself with an Evening to Remember at Water's Edge Restaurant & Bar

EAGLE BEACH — Located at Costa Linda Beach Resort between its captivating swimming pool and the amazing world-famous Eagle Beach Aruba, you will find 'Water's Edge Restaurant; a cozy, relaxing & inspiring Aruban restaurant. Serving the most mouthwatering dishes of all over the world to please all your taste buds with its popular and demanding international selection.

If you're looking for a phenomenal dinner experience that has all the ingredients for a wonderful gastronomic night, then you should book at least one night of your stay at Water's Edge Restaurant. Designed to pamper all your senses and cover all of your needs with an amazing staff to attend to your every wish, whether in the fine dining room or under a palapa with your toes in the sand.

Gastronomic journey

Kick start the night with a great, refreshing and most delicious cocktail mixed with concoctions before the grand tour of an extraordinary culinary experience. Start your journey with an exquisite appetizer such as the daily fresh made Water's Edge ceviche or maybe a world known jumbo shrimp cocktail followed by the Chef's special of seafood



such as the Spicy Caribbean Seafood pasta, Mahi Mahi or pan fried Red Snapper served with Aruban creole sauce or garlic lemon butter. For the carnivores among us there are choices of 8 ounce seasoned Filet Mignon, 12 ounce Rib Eye steak or a French Rack of Lamb seasoned and grilled to perfection. With choices of extra sides of fresh asparagus, seasonal vegetables, mashed or baked potatoes, fries or rice and beans. Combine your personal choice with one of the most exclusive wines from the great selection of international wines to compliment your dish. Kids will enjoy every item of the specially compiled kids menu. Vegetarians will enjoy the roasted vegetable pasta tossed in a light butter sauce and topped with freshly shaved parmesan cheese. As desserts the choices are wild. Homemade key lime pie, coconut flan served with caramel sauce and whipped cream or a NY cheese cake, chocolate brownie with chocolate sauce vanilla ice cream and whipped cream or a delicious oven fresh carrot cake served with orange sauce and candied pecans.



Whether it is the best seafood, steaks, chicken, pasta, or your continental favorites the reasonably priced menu offers a modern twist and features generous portions and Chef's specials.

Creating memories

Planning a birthday or anniversary dinner? Water's Edges Restaurants gives you the perfect gift. Here, you will receive a nice bottle of champagne to take home with you to extend your experience even further whether on the beach or your own private balcony.

Live entertainment:

Just about every day of the week, there is a different live entertainment by the best local artists for you to enjoy. On Monday & Saturday, Angela Flores, will delight you with her violin. Tuesday, Jean Paul, Saxophonist, will get you moving.

On Wednesday's and Sunday's singer Paula Ridderstap will make you sing along to all her tunes. Thursday's and Friday's guitarist Ricky Thomas will make you find your groove. And also on Sunday's Tico Kock will make you dance away to the sounds of his steel drum. Whether you're in a romantic mood or more in a swinging mood, there is absolutely a night especially for you. In addition, the best happy hour in Aruba happens right here. Water's Edge Restaurant offers three Happy Hours daily (12 noon – 1 pm, 4 pm – 6 pm, with complimentary hors d'oeuvres served by circulating staff, and again from 9 pm – 10 pm) with all premium brands specially priced.

Whether it's for breakfast, lunch or dinner, Water's Edge Restaurant & Bar offers a relaxed and inspirational dining experience overlooking the beautiful Eagle Beach with spectacular sunset views. Gather with friends and family for drinks and appetizers or a night of pampering and relaxation.

Water's Edge Restaurant & Bar is located at Costa Linda Beach Resort.

Open daily from 8am – 11pm
To reserve your table please call +297 583-8000 ext. 8150
For more information about the menus, entertainment and hours, please visit the website www.watersedge-aruba.com

